

Your Excellency the Minister of Economy
Mayors of Famalicão, Guimarães and Matosinhos
Mr. President of ITMF
Distinguished speakers
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome everyone! It is an enormous satisfaction and a great distinction for ATP and for the entire Portuguese Textile Industry to host ITMF 2019.

After many years in other countries and other continents, ITMF Conference returns to Europe through Portugal. This is an important and encouraging sign for the European and the Portuguese Textile Industry.

The city of Oporto has already hosted the ITMF Convention in 1969 and in 1993, so this will be the third time ATP has the pleasure of holding ITMF in Portugal. It is an honour for the Portuguese Textile chain. At the same time it closes a decade of great global Textile events being held in Portugal. The first was IAF Congress in 2012, then Euratex Annual Conference in 2017 and now the ITMF Conference in 2019.

The last decade was a time of recovery for the Portuguese Textile Industry. After having suffered successive and dramatic competitive shocks between 2001 to 2008 the Portuguese Textile Industry managed to re-invent itself with new and more valued drives, like design, technological innovation and intensive service. It also became increasingly international and competitive, especially on more demanding segments of the market. If we were to summarize the transformation in the Portuguese Textile Industry in the last 10 years we could say that it shifted competition based on price to competition based on value. The industry no longer is an order taker but is rather an active solution provider to the client. And finally it stopped acting casuistically and in unorganized way and did shift to align companies' strategic with the public policies to better use common resources and specifically use them on priority areas like professional education, technological innovation and internationalization. It means in a truly collective intelligent strategy.

The Textile Industry in Portugal has proven to be an international case study of success, and many other manufacturing activities even geographic scattered wish to imitate us on the pursuit of an identical achievement.

Today, the Portuguese Textile Industry although we are happy for the fact that the downward tendency has been reversed and at the same time demonstrated that manufacturing industry in a developed countries could be successful even though some political speeches believe not.

The ITMF Convention's subject could not be more up-to-date because it combines two of the most important challenges that the World's Textile Industry is facing: digitalization and sustainability - they will frame our activity for the future. And the future is now.

For this Convention we're counting on the world's Textile Industry elite, on all those leaders who set trends by their business strategic options, by their investments and by the innovation developed in their companies. It is them, - it all of us! -, who shape this traditional industry everyday into one of the most dynamic and innovative industries in the world, by incorporating knowledge and transforming it into useful technology, by generating and distributing wealth throughout the value chain and through its stakeholders.

Some people say Textile is the greatest business in the world, always growing, expanding to new areas – which not so long ago were not even identified. Textiles are everywhere and will increase their presence, because they offer answer to human necessities, in the way any other material or productive activity can nor with equal efficacy. This is the first certainty – Textile has a guaranteed place in the future, it depends only of our imagination, of our work and of our determination, so that the success of the past converts itself into a greater one in the future. The geopolitical and geo-economic tensions that are conditioning the present global growth and that might eventually anticipate a new global crisis are merely complex data of the equation that we will have to solve by transforming threats into opportunities.

Without losing realism and without concealing the problems at hand, just as their seriousness and consequences, I would like to leave a positive message to all, for none better than those who are here present know how to give a new future to our industry by the simple fact that you can make the future to our measure. Finally, I would like to give my profound acknowledgement to the President of ITMF for sharing the organization of this event with ATP. I would also like to thank all staff of ITMF and of ATP for the magnificent and highly professional work done so far. A special thanks to Mr. Paulo Melo, my predecessor at ATP presidency for the support he always gave to this event since the very beginning.

I thank all speakers for their high value collaboration that will certainly enrich the agenda and will turn this convention into one of the most interesting of all times. Likewise I wish to thank to all sponsors, enlightening institutional entities like the Municipalities of Famalicão, Matosinhos and Guimarães and also all the other foreign and Portuguese sponsors for their priceless support. Without all of them it wouldn't be possible to put up this event with the sparkle that we all recognize. I wish all an excellent and profitable congress and to those who're coming from abroad a pleasant stay and that you may take from Porto and this region a happy memory.

Thank you.

Mário Jorge Machado
President of ATP